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President's News Conference on Foreign and Domestic Issues

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

View On Nicaragua

Q. Mr. President, regarding the recent rebel attacks on a Nicaraguan oil depot, is it proper for the C.I.A. to be involved in planning such attacks and supplying equipment for air raids, and do the American people have a right to be informed about any C.I.A. role?

A. I think covert actions have been a part of government and a part of government's responsibilities for as long as there's been a government. I'm not going to comment on what, if any, connection such activities might have had with what has been going on or with some of the specific operations down there, but I do believe in the right of a country when it believes that its interests are best served to practice covert activity and then — while you people may have a right to know, you can't let your people know without letting the wrong people know — those that are in opposition to what you're doing.

EXCERPTED